

DOWNTOWN

el pasonext

ADELANTE

el centro

september 2008



Ready to Rent

Space is available this property at 519 South Oregon, one of the 13 to benefit from the City's Façade Improvement Program.



A Vision for Downtown Living

Fst Avenue Lofts kicks off Karam's "The El Paso Project"

In less than a year, a vacant textile building on Florence Street and First Avenue is set to debut a different style of living to the city.

"Fst Avenue Lofts is the blueprint for luxury living in Downtown El Paso, making the transition from suburban dwelling to urban living easy" said Luke Karam, who along with his brothers TJ and Ben are spearheading the mixed-use project. The plan is to have nine upscale condos on the building's second and third floors, and a retail component on the ground floor. There will also be a private covered parking garage and a rooftop terrace. "We have had an overwhelming amount of inquiries from potential residents," TJ Karam said, with three units already sold.

The housing development is part of a larger push by the Karams, called The El Paso Project.

According to the project website, the goal is to create a "walkable urbanism featuring convenient access is a powerful way for a growing community to attract and retain the young, smart citizens that communities depend on for a healthy economy and a healthy overall community."

TJ Karam said El Paso's potential is one of the main reasons they invested in Downtown.



300 South Florence

"We have witnessed the redevelopment of cities like Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth and the continuous redevelopment of Manhattan," he explained. "We understand El Paso is not any of these cities, but there is no reason our Downtown redevelopment can't be just as successful."

Luke Karam added that the Lofts will be "our resume and reputation. We plan on offering redevelopment services to Downtown property

owners. We are committed to Downtown."

Construction is set to begin in the next 30 days. TJ Karam said the project and its concepts have

met "little resistance. As with all new concepts, this will be an educational process. El Pasoans are ready for this. They just don't know it yet."

"From studying and researching downtown redevelopments, we believe El Paso has a head start," he added. "With companies like The El Paso Project and Mills Plaza Properties and the follow-through of other private investors, we believe Downtown El Paso will be a true urban environment in the next five years."

Online: www.theelpasoproject.com

Phone: (915) 204-3023



Artist's Rendering

RCIC plans business technology service center

The TransPecos/El Paso Regional Center for Innovation & Commercialization (RCIC) received a grant from the City of El Paso to support the establishment of a business technology service center in Downtown El Paso.

The center, approximately 900 square feet of office space on Overland Drive, will serve as a resource center for entrepreneurs who will be able to more readily access the RCIC's services, as well as a point of referral supporting the City's binational and technology development efforts.

The RCIC provides assistance to entrepreneurs, innovators, and investors by offering specific and well defined resources. The services to be offered at the center include:

- Texas Emerging Technology Fund application assistance

- Due diligence for high-tech companies seeking capital
- RCIC investor network access
- Deal vetting, management and oversight
- Educational workshops
- Intellectual property assessment and patent process guide
- "CXO" Academy (management team mentoring and recruitment)



As an example, in the new space the RCIC will collaborate with CIMAV (Mexico's Advanced Materials Science Research) to help commercialize their broad patent portfolio.

More info: (915) 613-2478 Ext. 2

Online: www.tpeprcic.org

September Events

Celebration — The Mexican Consulate will be celebrating the anniversary of the independence of Mexico with a festival filled charros, mariachis, horses and more.

Where: San Jacinto Plaza

When: Sept. 15, 5–9 p.m.

More Info: (915) 533-8555 or www.sre.gob.mx/elpaso

El Paso Symphony Orchestra —

“Spectacular Beginnings,” the opening concert of the 2008-2009 season.

Where: Plaza Theatre

When: Sept. 19-20 @ 7:30 p.m.

More Info: (915) 532-3776 or www.epso.org

TIRZ Board of Directors

Chair: Veronica Escobar
Vice-Chair: Pauline Dow

Jesse Alvarez

Marc Bernat

Bonnie S.Y. Escobar

Art Fierro

Rebecca Friesenhahn

Hector Gutierrez

Bill Hooten

Keith Mahar

Mike Murguia

Jim Phillips

George Reynoso

There is currently a vacancy on the TIRZ Board of Directors. Anyone interested in serving is asked to call (915) 541-4670 or email rosalesv@elpasotexas.gov

Business Spotlight: De Franco & Glasspear Designs

De Franco and Glasspear Designs is a jewelry store and studio shop known for its one-of-a-kind jewelry designs. The jewelry store also functions as a workshop for artists, with 300 square feet of workspace.

Owners Patricia Vaupel and Susana Cano offer a variety of jewelry and art-based services including original designs, custom orders, repair work, metalworking and educational courses using a varied selection of material sources such as seed beads, metals, recycled materials, polymer clay and of-course, precious stones.

The two business women realize that their wares would sell for much more in a place like Santa Fe, but have received so much support from the community and the border region that the duo have carved out a niche with their unique designs. Their success lies in

part from establishing friendships with their customers, taking pride in their work and doing what no one else does in the region.

With a wide array of prices, their jewelry can accommodate almost any budget. Their jewelry is sometimes recognized for the element of surprise, as in a multipurpose interchangeable necklace with a reversible face.

The partners pick up inspiration for their artwork from each other and from a variety of sources including nature, trends in jewelry, books and customers. Both women believe in giving back to the community and sometimes donate jewelry to different causes they support, to be auctioned off with the funds going directly to the charity.



Where: 500 N. Oregon, Studio D

When: Tuesday-Friday, 11 a.m.-6 p.m.

Saturdays, 1-6 p.m. (beginning Oct. 1)

Phone: (915) 351-1832

Property Highlight: 500 W. Overland St.

Class A office space, LEED-certified fixtures, lighting and insulation and a carrier-class data center. The building has a total of 110,000 square feet and is serviced by two parking lots and available space in the nearby Union Plaza parking garage. For more information on this property, call Ricardo Fernandez at (915) 539-2083.

To feature a Downtown building in *el centro*, send an email to rosalesv@elpasotexas.gov or call (915) 541-4670.



Meet the Board



**Art Fierro, TIRZ Board Member
Sales Representative, Pro-Printing, Inc.**

Art Fierro is a lifelong El Pasoan currently serving as the chair of the El Paso Community College Board of Trustees. Fierro has served as the president of El Paso Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and the Austin Hispanic Chamber of Commerce and is a current board member of the Hispanic Leadership Institute of El Paso. He has been involved with various community service organizations and was appointed to the Texas Small Business Advisory Committee by Sen. Kay Bailey Hutchinson.

city of el paso
economic development department
2 civic center plaza
el paso, texas 79901

PRESORTED
STANDARD
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
EL PASO, TX
PERMIT #726